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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2022
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [KCRM](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: DOD GENERAL COUNSEL HAYNES BRIEFS
TURKISH OFFICIALS ON IRAQ ARMS INVESTIGATION

REF: A. ANKARA 1866
[1](#)B. 06 ANKARA 6720 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains sensitive law enforcement information regarding ongoing investigations.

Summary

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Summary: Department of Defense General Counsel Haynes briefed Turkish officials July 25 on the ongoing DOD investigation into corruption relating to the procurement and provision of materiel, including weapons, to Iraqi Security Forces and their possible diversion (ref a). Haynes also briefed on the formation under the DOD Inspector General of a special team charged to assess and improve procedures to ensure accountability of weapons provided to the ISF. Turkish officials expressed appreciation for the USG's commitment to cooperate on arms leakage from Iraq. MFA U/S Apakan stated that Turkey had seized 1283 weapons of suspected U.S. origin and said that associates of KRG President Barzani provide weapons to the PKK, which derives revenue from arms smuggling that may be provided to terrorist groups throughout the region. DCHOD GEN Saygun questioned U.S. plans to deliver hundreds of millions of rounds of rifle ammunition to Iraq, and he complained about alleged U.S. contacts with, and arms supplies to, the PKK. Ambassador rejected these allegations. End Summary

GC Haynes: DOD Criminal Investigation and IG Team

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Haynes told Turkish officials that Defense Secretary Gates had asked him to brief them on DOD's ongoing

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DCIS investigation into malfeasance with regard to procurement and delivery of materiel, including weapons and ammunition, to Iraq over the past several years. Information developed thus far, including that provided by Turkey, suggest that poor accountability procedures resulted in some arms meant for Iraqi Security Forces being illegally diverted. Haynes described the formation of a team under the DOD Inspector General charged with assessing deficiencies in past and present practices with regard to accountability for arms provided to Iraq, fixing identified problems and making recommendations for the future. Some improved accountability procedures are already in place. Haynes cautioned his interlocutors that it is unrealistic to expect that

corruption and leakage of materiel to the black market can be completely eliminated, but assured them that the USG is committed to improving procedures to reduce the risk. He also reported that the U.S. has decided not to provide Iraq with some 50 tons of C-4 explosive listed on a procurement that appeared on the DSCA website that GEN Saygun had queried us about previously (ref b).

MFA U/S Apakan: We Want to Solve This Bilaterally

¶4. (S/NF) U/S Apakan, accompanied by D/US for Security Akgunay and Director General Guven, told Haynes that Iraq arms leakage is a "serious and vehement" issue for Turkey. Authorities have seized 1283 Iraq-origin weapons during anti-smuggling and counter-terrorism operations. Such weapons were used in the murder of a High Court judge in Ankara in May 2006 and a Catholic priest in Trabzon earlier the same year. He asserted that the PKK traffics in these weapons for revenue. Turkish authorities have information that Masood Barzani and the KDP have a hand in this trade. Seizures continue, he stated, complaining that Turkish authorities had provided 12 written reports to the U.S. since January 2005, so far without any response. He added that Turkey could bring up the matter at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, but prefers to resolve it bilaterally with the U.S. Given the public uproar over alleged weapons transfers to the PKK, it is important that Turkey and the U.S. continue to cooperate. Apakan and D/US Akgunay stressed that weapons from Iraq could also go to other terrorist groups in the region, making the problem much broader than the PKK.

¶5. (S/NF) DG Guven said that the government had not publicly revealed the use of U.S.-origin firearms in the murders of the judge and priest. However, it will be hard to keep the

weapons connection confidential in the event of further such crimes. Officials believe as many as 9,000 U.S.-origin weapons remain in circulation in Turkey out of over 400,000 weapons reportedly unaccounted for from Iraqi stocks. The U.S. should demonstrate that improved accountability and registration procedures are in place. Turkey would like details of our new procedures.

¶6. (S/NF) Apakan said he understood the enormous challenges faced by the U.S. in Iraq and stated that "your difficulties are our difficulties," as our countries share the same goals for Iraq. Turkey will continue to help ensure Iraqi unity and stability. These common efforts are impeded, however, as long as the public continues to focus on the arms issue. Haynes reiterated the seriousness of the USG's commitment to work on the problem, but warned that there are no magic solutions, corruption and the black market cannot be completely eliminated, and remediation efforts may take time to bear fruit. He emphasized that the principal focus of the DOD criminal investigation has been corruption, not arms smuggling. The IG's effort will address accountability practices. He thanked Turkey for its cooperation so far and hoped it would continue. DCM noted that the 12 reports mentioned by Apakan have been provided to investigators and are being acted on, even if we are not yet prepared to provide a comprehensive response.

¶7. (S/NF) Apakan promised Turkey's continued support and DCM suggested that the issue could be revisited during Apakan's late August visit to Washington, should there be further information to share at that time.

DCHOD Saygun: PKK Receiving U.S. Arms

¶8. (S/NF) D/CHOD GEN Saygun expressed appreciation for the information and assurances Haynes provided. Drawing a connection between U.S.-origin weapons and the PKK terrorist organization, he outlined Turkish military concerns about the reported breadth and scope of planned U.S. weapons deliveries to the ISF, ranging from bullets to reconnaissance aircraft.

Saygun asked why the U.S. planned to provide 250 million rounds of 5.56 mm rifle ammunition, where the ISF could safely store the 250 thousand cases the ammunition would come in, and who would use it. In the same vein, he inquired about reported plans to provide the ISF with 3 million gallons of aviation fuel. Acknowledging that some corruption and misuse would be inevitable, he stated that Turkey's concerns were bigger. He cited Turkish intelligence purporting to show PKK operatives discussing how to obtain more "very useful U.S. (origin) portable devices." He also noted testimony of captured PKK fighters who had publicly stated that U.S. troops in armored vehicles provided M-16 rifles directly to PKK fighters in the Kandil mountains of northern Iraq.

¶9. (S/NF) Saygun stated that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) believes the U.S. is talking to the PKK "at some level" and has reports that U.S. officials met with PKK terrorists in the "Marado" region of the Kandil mountains and elsewhere as many as 38 times so far in 2007. The Turkish military is concerned about apparent U.S. contact with the PKK and the possible provision by the U.S. of weapons to the PKK. Turkish authorities are convinced that Kurdish leader Masood Barzani and his Kurdish Democratic Party are facilitating the transfer of U.S.-provided arms to the PKK. Saygun also cited reported comments by Iraqi PM Maliki as well as alleged statements by U.S. military officers in Iraq that the U.S. is providing weapons to Sunni militias in order to counter Iran-backed Shi'a groups. Saygun suggested that arms being given to militias could easily end up in the hands of terrorist groups. Saygun said that Turkish authorities would continue to discuss these concerns in an open fashion with the U.S. and would share any information they obtain.

¶10. (S/NF) Haynes and Ambassador expressed appreciation for Turkey's willingness to continue its cooperation in this matter and noted that information provided by Turkish authorities on weapons seizures had already been helpful to the DOD investigation. Haynes noted that information uncovered in the course of the investigation so far had not led to a connection between U.S.-provided arms and the PKK. Ambassador stated clearly to Saygun that the U.S. does not provide arms, either directly or indirectly, to the PKK, and has no contact with the PKK as a matter of policy.

¶11. (S/NF) Haynes and his team also briefed Turkish National Police Director General Oguz Koksall and his investigators on the status of the DCIS investigation. Both sides pledged to continue close cooperation.

Comment

¶12. (S/NF) GC Haynes' briefings demonstrated to Turkish authorities our commitment to tackle the difficult issue of arms leakage from Iraq, while not giving them any illusion that this problem can be solved completely or instantly. It will be important to brief the Turks on results of the DOD IG survey and to give them details on how we are ensuring weapons accountability in Iraq as soon as they are available.
End Comment

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